

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 14, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 5, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 147

Introduced by Assembly Members Dickinson and Logue

(~~Coauthor: Assembly Member Perea~~)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Perea, Achadjian, Alejo, Allen, Ammiano, Atkins, Bigelow, Bloom, Bocanegra, Bonta, Bradford, Brown, Buchanan, Campos, Chávez, Chesbro, Conway, Cooley, Dababneh, Dahle, Daly, Donnelly, Eggman, Fong, Fox, Frazier, Garcia, Gatto, Gomez, Gonzalez, Gordon, Gorell, Gray, Grove, Hagman, Hall, Harkey, Roger Hernández, Holden, Jones, Jones-Sawyer, Levine, Linder, Lowenthal, Maienschein, Mansoor, Medina, Melendez, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nestande, Olsen, Pan, Patterson, V. Manuel Pérez, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Rendon, Rodriguez, Salas, Skinner, Stone, Ting, Wagner, Waldron, Weber, Wieckowski, Wilk, Williams, and Yamada)

May 6, 2014

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 147—Relative to Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 147, as amended, Dickinson. Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

This measure would designate November as California Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month. The measure would recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions Californians of Sikh heritage have made to the state. The measure would also seek to afford all

Californians the opportunity to understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, California and our nation are at once blessed and
2 enriched by the unparalleled diversity of our residents; and

3 WHEREAS, The Sikhs, who originated in Punjab, India, first
4 entered California in 1899 legally through the Angel Island
5 Immigration Station in San Francisco, California; and

6 WHEREAS, The Sikh pioneers initially worked on railroad
7 construction projects, and in lumber mills; and

8 WHEREAS, By 1910, these pioneers turned to farming in the
9 Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Imperial valleys; and

10 WHEREAS, On October 14, 1912, the first Sikh temple
11 (Gurdwara) in the United States, the Sikh Temple Stockton, was
12 founded by Professor Teja Singh of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan
13 Society; and

14 WHEREAS, There are now more than 100 Gurdwaras in the
15 United States; and

16 WHEREAS, The Stockton Record, dated November 22, 1915,
17 quoted the Gurdwara's elected leadership declaring, "We do not
18 permit our people to become charges on public charity. If a man
19 is hungry and out of funds we feed him. Our dining room is open
20 at all hours of the day and is closed only for a few hours during
21 the night. The unfortunate hungry American will be as welcome
22 as our own people"; and

23 WHEREAS, Legislation to authorize Sikhs and other East Indian
24 immigrants to naturalize as United States citizens was not enacted
25 until 1946; and

26 WHEREAS, On January 1, 1912, Jawala Singh and Wasakha
27 Singh, who migrated to California through Angel Island in 1908
28 and served as the founding Granthis of the Sikh Temple Stockton,
29 recognized the value of education, and started six Sri Guru Govind
30 Singh Educational Scholarships at the University of California,
31 Berkeley; and

32 WHEREAS, These scholarships were awarded without regard
33 to ethnicity or religion and the first awardees included three
34 Hindus, one Christian, one Sikh, and one Muslim; and

WHEREAS, Board and lodging was provided at the students home at 1731 Allston Way, Berkeley, where smoking and drinking were prohibited; and

WHEREAS, On November 1, 1913, Ghadar, the first Punjabi-language newspaper in the United States, was published by Kartar Singh Sarabha, who was then 17 years of age, with financial support from the Stockton Gurdwara; and

WHEREAS, On December 31, 1913, Jawala Singh and Wasakha Singh organized the Ghadri Conclave in Sacramento to form the Ghadar Party to overthrow the British colonial rulers of the Indian subcontinent; and

WHEREAS, The Ghadar Party sent 616 of its members to India, of whom 86 percent were Sikhs; and

WHEREAS, Homage is paid to them annually at a dozen different gatherings (Melas) from Sacramento, California, to Bakersfield, California; and

WHEREAS, The Sikh history and culture is represented in the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., in the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County, and the Museum at the Sikh Temple Stockton; and

WHEREAS, Sikh farmers contribute abundantly towards production of peaches (Didar Singh Bains), raisins (Charanjeet Singh Batth), pistachios (Mangar family), and okra and other vegetables (Harbhajan S. Samra); and

WHEREAS, Sikhs have also excelled in security services (Akal Security) and transportation services, and as doctors, attorneys, engineers, teachers, and other notable capacities, and as small business owners; and

WHEREAS, Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh who was born in Punjab, India, and earned a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 1924, initially worked as a foreman of cotton pickers in the Imperial Valley, and later became a farmer, played a major role in raising the funds needed to lobby for the Luce-Celler Act of 1946 that enabled him and others to naturalize as citizens, and served as an elected judge in the Westmoreland Judicial District from 1952 to 1956, before becoming the first Asian American elected to the United States Congress, wherein he served three terms from 1957 to 1963; and

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans have served as mayors of many California cities, including, for example David Dhillon in El

1 Centro, Gurpal Samra in Livingston, Amarpreet “Ruby” Dhaliwal
2 in San Joaquin, Sonny Dhaliwal in Lathrop, and Kashmir Singh
3 Gill in Yuba City. Numerous Sikh Americans have served as
4 council members of California cities; and

5 WHEREAS, Bhagat Singh Thind, a Sikh born in Punjab, India,
6 who was a United States Veteran of World War I, who campaigned
7 actively for the independence of India from the British Rule, and
8 who supported Indian students and lectured on metaphysics
9 throughout the United States, has been honored by the Fred
10 Korematsu Institute as a “Race in the Courts Hero” for fighting
11 his citizenship case in the United States Supreme Court in 1923;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Sikhs have served in all American wars since WWI;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Narinder Singh Kapany of Palo Alto, a Sikh born
16 in Punjab, India, is an accomplished scientist and inventor, who
17 has been awarded over 100 patents that spurred advances in lasers,
18 biomedical instrumentation, pollution monitoring, and solar energy,
19 and is widely acknowledged to be the father of fiber optics, a
20 technology that has allowed for high-speed digital communication;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Yuba City, often called “Mini-Punjab” because of
23 its 10 percent Punjabi population, commemorates the inauguration
24 of the holy Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, on the first
25 Sunday of November, rain or shine, and this international event
26 has in recent years attracted up to 100,000 participants from all
27 over the United States, Canada, and even abroad; and

28 WHEREAS, Sikh Americans throughout California celebrate
29 the coronation of Sikh scripture and other Sikh festivals at the
30 Gurdwaras and through parades in cities across California and the
31 United States; and

32 WHEREAS, Various Sikh organizations, including the Sikh
33 Council of Central California, the Sikh Coalition, the Sikh
34 American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Sikhs United,
35 Jakara, and individual Gurdwaras participate in interfaith meetings,
36 seminars, conferences, meetings, and functions and share the tenets
37 of their monotheistic religion that respects other religions and
38 welcome all to their Gurdwaras, and try to promote mutual
39 understanding and respect among all peoples; and

1 WHEREAS, The Sikh American community continues to make
2 significant contributions to the California and United States
3 economies and societies through military service, as business
4 owners, transportation professionals, doctors, attorneys, engineers,
5 teachers, farmers, and in a great many other notable capacities;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Since September 11, 2001, the Sikhs are often
8 mistaken for terrorists of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaida owing to
9 the commonality of beard and the turban, and subjected to a
10 disproportionately high rate of hate crimes, and Sikh boys suffer
11 bullying at twice the national bullying rate for other boys; and

12 WHEREAS, The Sikh American community continues to
13 peacefully overcome attacks on its identity and practices, whether
14 in the form of school harassment, employment discrimination, or
15 fatal shootings, including the murders of six Sikhs during the Oak
16 Creek Wisconsin Sikh Gurdwara shooting on August 5, 2012, as
17 well as the senseless murders of Surinder Singh and Gurmej Atwal
18 in Elk Grove, California, on March 4, 2011; and

19 WHEREAS, The faithful service of the Sikh American
20 community to this state and country merits appreciation as an
21 integral thread in the fabric of American plurality; now, therefore,
22 be it

23 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
24 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby designates the
25 month of November to be California's Sikh American Awareness
26 and Appreciation Month; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes and acknowledges
28 the significant contributions made by Californians of Sikh heritage
29 to our state, and by adoption of this resolution, seeks to afford all
30 Californians the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and
31 appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans;
32 and be it further

33 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
34 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution to the
35 Members of the Legislature, members of the California Sikh
36 American community, and other interested organizations or
37 persons.

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